

# Kelly Akashi

## *Cultivator*

Opening April 3, 2021



François Ghebaly is proud to announce the outdoor presentation of Kelly Akashi's *Cultivator*, a new large scale sculpture in bronze, stainless steel, and hand-blown glass by the Los Angeles-based artist. The work is now on view at the entrance to the gallery.

Delicately attuned to how materials carry and convey their own temporalities, Kelly Akashi has developed an incisive sculptural practice that addresses the passage of time on scales as deep as the geologic and as fleeting as a photographic exposure. For *Cultivator*, Akashi began with a unique wax cast of her hand, part of a long running series that uses wax to capture the minute details of her hands. She envisions the series extending into the future, a growing archive that will in sum tell the story of a life through the aging and change written into the artist's hand. This particular hand cast was then scanned, enlarged to a monumental scale, and cast again in bronze, amplifying the topography of the skin and fingernails, the creases and pores, and the artifacts resulting from the casting process itself.

Rising above the oversized hand, coils and twists of stainless steel hold aloft hand-blown glass flowers: two luminous California poppies, an alabaster cluster of manzanita flowers, a flared island morning glory. All three flowers are species native to southern California, reflecting this specific habitat and the interlinked organisms that define it. For Akashi, who grew up in Los Angeles, this meditation on place also mirrors the community of artists and craftspeople who have mentored her over time, imparting knowledge to her own growth as a maker. The sculpture stands in opposition to a vision of success that elevates the individual with metaphors of violence and dominance, rooting instead into a ground of mutual cultivation and harmony.

**Kelly Akashi** (b. 1983, Los Angeles) lives and works in Los Angeles. A previous iteration from her *Cultivator* series was unveiled at the Aspen Art Museum, where it has been on view since July 2020. Akashi has presented solo exhibitions at François Ghebaly, Los Angeles; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York; ARCH Athens, Greece; and SculptureCenter, New York. Her work is held in the public collections of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn; X Museum, Beijing; and Sifang Museum, Nanjing, among others.